

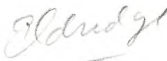
LA SALLE COLLEGE

News Release

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A leading social scientist has called for a community "more sensitive to the values, attitudes and problems of white, urban, ethnic America" if the U.S. is to solve its urban crisis.

Dr. Murray Friedman, a lecturer in sociology at La Salle College and area chairman of the American Jewish Committee, offered the comment in the fall issue of LA SALLE, a quarterly magazine for the 20,000 alumni, students and faculty of the liberal arts college. The current issue -- for distribution next week -- is a special edition entitled, "Crisis in the Cities."

Dr. Friedman's article is based on the AJC study of Philadelphia's Kensington area after the racial turmoil that occurred when a Negro family moved in the neighborhood last year. He calls the AJC "the nation's oldest intergroup relations agency."

"White rioting has been obscured because the explosions in Watts, Detroit and other cities have been more destructive in property damage and loss of life and the perpetrators are white urban ethnic groups who are generally ignored," Dr. Friedman said.

"These groups, however, like Negroes, are victims of certain deep seated urban pathologies," he added. "Yet while there has been much analysis of Negro rioting -- and more are on the way -- there has been little or no attempt to understand the underlying factors involved in white racial explosions."

"The problems of Kensington and other areas that have experienced white rioting," Dr. Friedman continued, "cannot be laid completely at the door of poverty any more than the all-Negro riots. Though a step or two above most Negroes on the economic ladder -- many have moved into the lower middle class -- Kensingtonians are beset by economic problems and status anxieties."

(MORE)

"These anxieties are increased," he remarked, "as they watch -- in their opinion -- the lawlessness of Negro violence in Watts and Detroit being rewarded by special federal and city efforts to aid the Negro."

"The unmet and insensitive handling of the needs of older and poor sections of white, urban, ethnic America by community officials and planners are as much a national scandal as similar failures in Negro ghetto areas," Dr. Friedman asserted. "They are an important factor in the 'white backlash' in Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and other cities."

"One is struck by one basic element found in studies of explosions by Negroes in Watts and other parts of the country," he stated. "Beyond their aggressive and seemingly self-confident behavior is an underlying feeling of powerlessness. Here are people with severe problems they are unable to deal with, that the community is overlooking, and who find it difficult to take their place in an increasingly middle-class American society. In short, while white Kensingtonians differ from ghetto Negroes in kinds and causes of their difficulties and how they view the racial status quo, both groups are Americans in trouble."

Friedman called for "a new political alliance that will include the economically disadvantaged of all races and the forces pressing for inclusion of the Negro into all areas of American life. This will be impossible to bring about, however, until the community becomes more sensitive to the values, attitudes and problems of white, urban, ethnic America."